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ABSTRACT

Parents usually depend on educators to initiate parental involvement in education. This project assessed the attitudes of 104 low income, inner city black parents toward their child's school and how the parents saw themselves as being involved in their child's education. Subjects represented a random sample of parents whose children attended four schools (two elementary and two secondary) within a large, mid-south urban school system. Data were collected by interviewers who visited the home and conducted a structured interview of about one hour. The interview schedule consisted of 27 Likert-type questions on parents' attitudes about education, how parents see their involvement with their child's school, and parents' role in helping their child at home with school-related work. Three open-ended questions on parental concerns about education, teachers, and student competence completed the interview. The major findings were that the parents thought education was important and that schools were basically doing a good job and were concerned about their child's progress in school. Parents expressed their desire to stay informed of school business and to work in a supportive, facilitative role rather than a decision-making role. (Author)

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HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONS:

TOGETHER WE STAND

OR

DIVIDED WE FAIL

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Introduction

Teacher Corps was established by the U.S. Congress in 1965 as a nationwide effort to strengthen the educational opportunities available to children living in areas having high concentrations of low income families, to encourage colleges and universities to broaden their program of teacher preparation and to encourage institutions of higher education and local educational agencies to improve programs of training and retraining teachers, teacher aides, and other educational personnel. For many school districts, Teacher Corps has been the means of revitalizing ties with their communities through providing opportunities for parents and others to participate in school activities and decision-making.

The struggle to unite parents and teachers together as partners rather than adversaries in the education of children has made progress but is not over. Many principals and teachers are still educational elitists. They want to reserve the education of children as exclusively their job. Consequently, parents have not only been barred from active involvement in school and discouraged from helping their children but led to believe that their aid may be destructive (Gordon, 1972).

Educational elitism combined with schools becoming the focus of much of the Civil Rights movement, teacher strikes, falling student achievement and increased disciplinary problems during the past decade have particularly seen the relationship between home and school become jaded and filled with mistrust. Parents often view teachers as unconcerned about their children and primarily interested in the perceived benefits of a teaching career: shorter hours, holidays, vacations and salary (Coletta, 1977). Conversely, numerous teachers demonstrate what Blessington (1974) has termed "myopic humanism", i.e., having love and concern for children, yet viewing parents as the enemy. Too often, teachers' or parents' negative experiences with the other lead to unfair generalizations about most teachers or

most parents. Ironically, neither group would consider generalizing one child's inappropriate behavior to the majority of children. Yet, a lack of trust often causes home-school communication to break down.

In spite of the underlying lack of trust and break down in home-school communications, interest in parent involvement in education has increased dramatically since its re-discovery in 1959 (Anselmo, 1977). Legal action helped speed up the re-discovery. In California, the Miller-Unruh Basic Reading Act of 1965 provided funds for librarians; however, when qualified librarians could not be found, volunteers stepped in and operated the library program quite adequately (Kennison, 1977). When the Head Start legislation of 1965 was enacted, several of the educational models were designed to extend schooling into the home and help parents learn how to be better teachers of their own children. In October, 1971 the United States office of Education issued an addendum to Title I which mandated a role for parents in decision-making, assessment and evaluation. Teacher Corps likewise mandated the creation and direct, active involvement of a Community Council in all phases of every Teacher Corps project. These programs began to break down the walls of mistrust and lead to other types of parental involvement as cafeteria workers, school crossing guards, bus drivers, carpenters, teacher aides and instructional assistants.

As America moved into the late 1970's, parents were no longer just room mothers. They were increasingly active, informed participants in the educational process. Research relating to their participation has clearly shown direct, lasting and reverberating positive affects on the schools, children and parents themselves (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Day and Parker, 1977; Lazar, et.al., 1978; and Walleta and Goldman, 1979). Yet, even with the research evidence clearly pointing out the benefits of parent involvement and legislation mandating it, parent involvement is not a large scale educational practice in the United States today. In most cases,

parents depend on educators to initiate involvement but educators have done little to initiate involvement (Pellegrino, 1972). Educators, in the main, do not seem to understand how parents see themselves as being involved in education or how they, the educators, could most effectively involve parents. So each group stands waiting for the other to act. Renewing the sense of trust between home and school and creating a partnership based on clear communication, reciprocity and mutual benefit waits.

Purpose

Given that one of the major goals of the Mid-South Teacher Corps, Program '78 is to initiate actions which will once again unite parents and teachers working together as educational partners committed to developing the compentencies of inner city children, and given that actions intended to unite are most effective when they are relevant to the problem at hand and relevance is in the "eye of the beholder", the purpose of this project was to find out how parents whose children attended participating Teacher Corps schools felt about the schools and how they saw themselves as being involved in their child's education. The results of this survey, in conjunction with the teachers' survey and logistical considerations, were used to design a comprehensive parent involvement program which will begin to be implemented during the 1979-80 school year.

Sample

The target school system is an urban school system of about 108,000 students. Approximately 80% of the system's students are Black and 70% meet federal poverty guidelines, thus, participate in the free lunch program. The four schools (two elementary, one junior high, and one high school) participating in Teacher Corps '78 constitute a well-defined neighborhood feeder system. During the 1978-79 school

year, elementary school #1 had an enrollment of 585 pupils, elementary school #2 enrolled 590 pupils, the junior high school enrolled 640 pupils and the high school served 1,080 pupils. The percentage of poverty existing within each school's student population is in excess of 90%, with the exception of the high school which is 70%. However, the high school is adjacent to one of the largest public housing facilities in the Mid-South -- 88% of the families living within this facility with school aged children have incomes well below the established poverty level. The target school's student population is predominately black but the professional staff is racially balanced.

To obtain the sample for the study, each school provided a list by grade level of all students attending the school. Each student within each school was assigned a number and a table of random numbers was used to select five students from each of the six grade levels for each elementary school and 10 students from each of the three grade levels of the junior high school and high school. This procedure resulted in a randomly selected sample of 30 students per school with equal representation for each grade level. The total sample generated was 120.

Procedure

Since the four target schools served predominately low income children, it was assumed that their parents may have low reading skills and high mistrust of strangers. Thus, by using a structured interview data collection instrument, questionable parental reading skills were eleminated as a data collection problem and by using individuals from the indigenous community as interviewers in conjunction with conducting the interviews in each parents home, the mistrust of strangers was minimized.

A list of potential interviewers was obtained by asking the principal of each target school to develop a list of parents active in the school's activities. Parents whose names appeared on the lists were telephoned, the project described, the interviewers role described and they were informed that they would be paid $7.00 for each completed interview. Parents were telephoned until five parents from each school agreed to serve as interviewers.

All interviewers attended a group training session. At the training session, the project staff were introduced, the purpose of the project explained and the interview instrument given out. Each interview question was read aloud, discussed and questions answered. Next, each interviewer was given a written sample protocal of how to explain the project and interview to prospective interviewees. Project staff then discussed some tips for successful interviewing and role played an interview from initial contact to turning in the completed interview form. Finally, the interview trainees divided into pairs and took turns role playing a complete interview with each other. Project staff circulated around the room during role playing to answer individual questions and give specific suggestions intended to improve interviewing skills. After role playing, a general discussion was held and four of the 16 parents who participated in the interview training session chose not to be a project interviewer. The remaining 12 interviewers were given a list of 10 names, addresses and telephone numbers, when available. They were instructed to begin with the name at the top of their list and interview the first nine people appearing on their list. Each interview was to be conducted in the parent's home at a time convenient with the parent being interviewed.

At the agreed upon time, the interviewer went to the parent's home and, after a brief social interaction, the interview began with the interviewer giving the interviewee a copy of the interview instrument then reading each question aloud

and recording the interviewee's response. All interviews were conducted during the first two weeks of November, 1978. Interviews averaged about one hour in length. Of the 108 interviews attempted, 104 were completed. Four of the completed interviews did not have all questions answered, thus, were not usable. Interruptions (i.e., telephone ringing, neighbors coming in, younger children needing assistance) were the reasons for three of the interviews not being completed. Parent refusal (i.e., "I don't want no more questions.") accounted for the remaining interview that was begun not being completed. Lack of correct address, parents frequently move, was the reason the 104 rather than 108 parents were interviewed.

Interview Instrument

The first step in developing an item pool for the interview instrument was to conduct open-ended interviews with selected leaders in the target community. Six general questions were used to facilitate the interview: 1) how good are schools in the community; 2) how can schools in this community be improved; 3) how do schools in this community serve the community; 4) how can schools in this community better serve the community; 5) what is the parents' role in the education of their children; and 6) what do children today need to know. Notes were taken by the interviewer during the interview. After all interviews were completed, themes and valuation of themes emerging from the interviews were determined. Next, specific questions which seemed to assess each of the themes were written. All the interviewing, coding of interviews and writing of questions was done by one of the authors.

While the interviews with community leaders were being completed another of the authors was reviewing the literature on parents' attitudes toward public education and parent involvement in public education. Gordon and Breivogel's (1976)

conceptualization of the different levels of possible parent involvement in education (i.e., 1) supporter, facilitator or service giver, 2) teacher of own children, 3) paid aide or volunteer in the classroom, 4) decision maker, and 5) learner) served as major factors around which the literature on parent involvement was organized. After reviewing and organizing the literature, specific questions were written which seemed to assess major points revealed about parents' attitudes toward education and involvement practices clustering around each of Gordon and Breivogel's levels of parent involvement.

The final strategy used to generate possible questions for inclusion in the instrument was to have selected persons from the community write questions which they thought most clearly and cogently assessed their views of 1) school, 2) parents' role in the education of their child, and 3) community support of education.

After questions from the three question generation strategies were completed, they were written on 3 x 5 cards and assigned a number. Each author then sorted the questions into piles that seemed to go together. Comparisons were made between sortings and questions judged by all authors to be peripheral or redundant were eleminated. The remaining questions were edited and written as a 64 item, four point Likert-type instrument.

Four university students who lived in the target community were hired to pilot the instrument. Each student used the instrument as a structured interview schedule to interview four parents who lived in the target community and had school aged children. A review of responses to the 16 pilot interviews and discussions with the interviewers led the authors to conclude that the instrument was too long and some questions were too vague. Consequently, the instrument was revised from 64 Likert-type questions and eight open ended questions to 27 Likert-type questions and three open ended questions. Fourteen of the items on the finished instrument

assessed parents' attitudes about education, eight asked how parents see their involvement with their child's school and five questions related to specific parent behaviors related to helping their child at home with school related work. The three open ended questions asked were: 1) What is your number one concern about education? 2) I wish my child would ... and 3) Students don't try because ...

The finished interview instrument consisted of three sections. Section I included the 27 Likert-type questions that were answered strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. The interviewer read aloud each question then separately recorded the parents' rating of its relative applicability to community elementary schools and secondary schools. Hence, each parent rated each question twice. Section II contained the three open ended questions. Parent responses to the open ended questions were recorded verbatim by the interviewer. Section III obtained demographic information relative to the interviewees' sex and relationship to head of household, population of household, age, sex and grade level of all children living in the household, residency ownership and number of rooms, employment status of adults living in household, total family income, and educational level of each adult living in the household. (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the Interview Instrument)

Results

Demographic information from Section III of the interview instrument will be presented first. This will be followed by a descriptive presentation of results from Section I and Section II. Finally, results from analyses examining the impact of population of respondent's household, type of residence, age of respondent and education of respondent on the 27 questions contained in Section I of the interview will be presented.

Description of Sample

Of the 100 households represented in the sample, 94 of the people interviewed were females. Seventy-one of the females were the mother of the household. The mean age of the interviewee was 36 years old. Thus, responses to the questions basically reflect the views of mothers who are in the middle of their child rearing years.

The average size of a household was 5.20 persons, or, 1.88 adults and 3.32 children per household. Of the 332 children living in the household, 52 were above 18 years of age, 138 were between 12-18 years old and 142 were between 3-22 years old. Thus, the children were about equally divided between being elementary school aged and secondary school aged. Female and male children were also about equally represented in the households being studied. The majority of the school aged children attended one of the four Teacher Corps schools (n=201) but 23 different schools throughout the city were attended by children living in the households studied.

Almost 90% of the families studied rented their place of residence and most of the residences were public housing. The mean number of rooms per residence was 4.9 or .94 rooms per resident. Sixty-six per cent of the eligible adults were unemployed. Of those that did work, 45% worked as laborers and service workers. The annual income of 83% of the households was below $7,999. Approximately 37% of the adult residents completed eight grade or below, another 23% completed only 1-3 years of high school, 32% completed high school, and only 8% completed some college.

Responses to Interview Questions - Section I

Responses to each question were scored 4 for strongly agree, 3 for agree, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree. The mean response for questions ranged from 2.77 to 3.53, thus, there was no significant difference between any of

the 27 questions. Nor, were there any significant differences between elementary and secondary means on any individual questions. Tables 1-3 listed below give the mean response to specific questions contained in each area of the interview instrument.

Table 1

Mean Response To Interview Questions Assessing Parents' Attitudes About Education (N=100)

1. Do you think schools are doing a pretty good job?

   Elementary 3.10 Jr. & Sr. High 3.09

2. Do you see yourself as actively involved in your child's education?

   Elementary 3.15 Jr. & Sr. High 3.19

3. Is your child learning what you expected him/her to learn?

   Elementary 2.88 Jr. & Sr. High 2.92

4. Do you think your child is learning what he/she needs to know to be successful in life?

   Elementary 2.86 Jr. & Sr. High 2.77

5. Do you expect your child to do well in school?

   Elementary 3.56 Jr. & Sr. High 3.53

6. Are the values the child is learning in school the values you want him/her to learn?

   Elementary 3.07 Jr. & Sr. High 3.03

7. Do you feel welcome at your child's school?

   Elementary 3.26 Jr. & Sr. High 2.24

8. Do you feel your child's school cares about what you think about the type of education your child is receiving?

   Elementary 3.15 Jr. & Sr. High 3.09

9. Do you feel your child's teacher is really trying to help your child learn?

   Elementary 3.06 Jr. & Sr. High 2.96

10. Do you think your child's teacher(s) expects him/her to do well in school?

Elementary 3.31 Jr. & Sr. High 3.23

11. Should your child's school make special efforts to help your child feel good about himself/herself as a Black person?

Elementary 3.47 Jr. & Sr. High 3.43

12. Should your child's school make special efforts to help your children understand other ethnic, cultural and racial groups?

Elementary 3.38 Jr. & Sr. High 3.33

13. If you are concerned about something going on at school, do you feel free to talk with:

A. The principal

Elementary 3.51 Jr. & Sr. High 3.30

B. Your child's teacher

Elementary 3.22 Jr. & Sr. High 3.19

14. Are you satisfied with the work of your child's principal?

Elementary 3.14 Jr. & Sr. High 3.11

Table 2

Mean Response To Interview Questions Assessing How Parents' See Themselves As Involved With Their Child's School (N=100)

1. If the school held meetings for parents to explain the curriculum, philosophy and how parents could help would you attend?

Elementary 3.26 Jr. & Sr. High 3.18

2. Would you be willing to go to your child's school to talk about your work, hobby, etc. or help out in the health room, library, etc.?

Elementary 3.10 Jr. & Sr. High 3.02

3. When your child's school puts on some activity, do you attend?

Elementary 3.06 Jr. & Sr. High 3.02

4. Would you be willing to serve as an aide or volunteer in your child's classroom?

Elementary 2.94 Jr. & Sr. High 2.87

5. Would you be willing to serve on one of the school's decision making bodies, such as, Title I Advisory Committee, PTA, Principal's Advisory Committee, Teacher Corps Advisory Committee, etc.?

   Elementary 2.92 Jr. & Sr. High 2.87

6. I wish my child's school would hold regular meetings to keep me informed about what is going on in the school.

   Elementary 3.32 Jr. & Sr. High 3.26

7. I wish my child's school would hold meetings to help me learn how to help my child in school?

   Elementary 3.32 Jr. & Sr. High 2.26

8. Does the school send home written material about what is doing on in school?

   Elementary 2.95 Jr. & Sr. High 2.81

Table 3

Mean Response To Interview Questions Assessing Parent Behaviors Related To Helping Their Child At Home With School Related Work (N=100)

1. If your child needs help with his/her homework, do you help?

   Elementary 3.30 Jr. & Sr. High 3.21

2. Do you see-to-it that your child gets his/her homework done?

   Elementary 3.50 Jr. & Sr. High 3.42

3. Do you see-to-it that your child has a quiet place to study?

   Elementary 3.29 Jr. & Sr. High 3.22

4. Do you and your child look over the papers, projects, materials, etc. he/she brings home form school?

   Elementary 3.38 Jr. & Sr. High 3.30

5. Do you buy special books and other materials for the home which are intended to help your child in their education?

   Elementary 3.22 Jr. & Sr. High 3.16

Though the differences were not significant, the questions that received the lowest ratings have some elements in common. That is, they showed that the parents were not indifferent toward the education of their children. They were concerned about what their child was learning but did not necessarily want to be directly involved in the daily schooling process. Questions receiving the lowest ratings were:

1. Do you think your child is learning what he/she needs to know to be successful in life?
2. Is your child learning what you expected him/her to learn?
3. Would you be willing to serve as an aide or volunteer in your child's classroom?
4. Would you be willing to serve on one of the school's decision making bodies, such as, Title I Advisory Committee, PTA, Principals Advisory Committee, Teacher Corps Advisory Committee, etc.?
5. Does the school send home written material about what is going on in school?

Even though the parents were hesitant about becoming directly involved in the the daily schooling process, they expected their child to do well in school and were willing to see-to-it that homework was completed or to talk with the principal if they became concerned about something going on at school. The followirg questions received the highest rating were:

1. Do you expect your child to do well in school?
2. Do you see-to-it that your child gets his/her homework done?
3. If you are concerned about something going on at school, do you feel free to talk with the principal?

Overall, the questions tended to reveal that the inner city Black parents interviewed felt that schooling was important, it was doing a good job, and teachers and principals were working in the best interest of their children. No adversarial

relation was perceived; thus, parents were willing to leave direct schooling to the professionnal staff and spend their efforts supporting the efforts and activities of the school.

Response To Interview Questions - Section II

The responses to the three open ended questions were recorded verbatim. A content analysis was then performed on the responses to each question to tease out the content and frequency of responses. Table 4 gives the results of the content analysis of each question and the number of times a given content area was reported.

Table 4

Content Analysis of Responses To Open Ended Questions

What is your number one concern about education?

1. Students learning what they need to - 19
2. Students learning what they need to get a job - 18
3. That it be as good as possible - 13
4. That students understand what they're learning - 8
5. That students are able to go to college - 6
6. That everything is all right - 4
7. That it is very important - 3
8. That teachers have enough time for children - 2
9. That teachers control children better - 2
10. That students don't get enough homework - 2
11. Students attending everyday - 2
12. Parents should receive a better education - 2

13. Children should be taught proper conduct - 2
14. Smaller teacher/pupil ratios - 1
15. Problems in the system itself, like the strike - 1
16. Better materials - 1
17. Children need more days in school - 1
18. Children need to see homework after it is graded - 1

I wish my child's teacher would . . .

1. Send more work home - 20
2. Contact me more often - 17
3. Keep doing what she is doing - 13
4. Spend more time with individual children - 13
5. Make children work harder in books - 8
6. Teach better - 6
7. Be more understanding with children - 4
8. Explain the lesson better - 3
9. Work harder with children - 3
10. Help children see how education can help them better themselves - 3
11. Go at a slower pace - 2
12. Have more respect for students - 1
13. Be more dedicated to students - 1
14. Send work that has already been graded home - 1
15. Stop talking about children - 1
16. Stop having class favorites - 1
17. Be more concerned with student's behavior - 1

Students don't try because . . .

1. They are not interested in learning - 24
2. Parents don't encourage them - 15

3. Poor home environment - 11
4. Teachers don't take enough interest - 7
5. Relationships between teachers/students - 6
6. No one motivates them - 4
7. Too many outside activities - 3
8. They are slow learners - 3
9. Poor background (doomed to failure) - 3
10. Unbalanced diet - 3
11. They don't see how it will help them be successful - 3
12. Teachers curse and holler at them - 3
13. They are nervous - 3
14. Peers make fun of them and label them - 3
15. Teachers talk about students - 3
16. They get into a bad crowd at school - 2
17. They think they are too grown up to get their lesson - 2
18. They don't have anyone to help them - 2
19. They are not punished enough - 1
20. Teacher continues to criticize them - 2
21. They know they can do what they want to and the teacher won't interfere - 1
22. Lack of self-confidence - 1
23. Lack of will-power - 1
24. Think street life is better - 1
25. Staying up too late - 1
26. They don't understand the teachers - 1
27. They are afraid and don't realize that teachers are trying to help them - 1

28. They are lazy - 1

29. They don't want to go to school - 1

30. They think everybody is down on them - 1

Overall, the content analysis of the parents' responses to the three open ended questions indicated that their number one concern about education was whether or not it was preparing their child to be successful in life. Consistent with this fundamental concern, parents wished teachers would keep them better informed by contacting them more often and sending work home. However, parents seemed reluctant to blame the school for some children not trying in school. They were more willing to place the blame on students themselves, parents and home environment rather than teachers.

The final analyses performed utilized the chi-square test to determine if the frequency of responses given to each question significantly varied as a function of the population of the household, number of children living in the household, type of residence, age of respondent, or educational level of the respondent.

Population of Household

A 5 x 4 chi-square test was used to tell whether the five household population groups (i.e., 2-3 household members, 4 members, 5 members, 6-7 members and 8 or more members) had significantly different distributions across each of the response categories (i.e., strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). A separate X^2 test was performed for each of the 27 interview questions pertaining to elementary schools then repeated for secondary schools.

Results of the X^2 tests showed that population of household affected responses to only five of the 27 questions. Specifically, 1) small families were found to be less enthusiastic about the job schools were doing ($p = .01$, elementary and

p = .06, secondary); 2) families with 4-5 members saw themselves as less actively involved in their children's education (p = .11, elementary and .09 secondary); 3) individuals living in households with 2-3 members or 6-7 members were less willing to attend meetings to help them learn how to help their children in school (p = .15, elementary and p = .04 secondary); 4) individuals living in households with 2-3 members or 5 members felt less strongly that their elementary child's teacher was really helping their child to learn (p = .14, elementary, p = .36 secondary); and 5) households with 2-3 members felt less strongly that the teachers of their secondary children expected them to do well in school (p = .20, elementary and .03, secondary).

The only pattern to emerge from the data seems to be that families with 2-3 members are less enthusiastic about the job schools and teachers are doing and are less willing to have schools teach them how to help assist their child in school.

Number Of Children Living In The Household

A 6 x 4 chi-square test was used to tell whether the number of children living in the household (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or more) was related to the distribution of responses to each question across the four response categories. Results showed that: 1) respondents with 1 or 2 children were less willing to go to their child's school and tell about their work, hobby, etc. or help out in the health room, library, etc. (p = .12, elementary, p = .13 secondary); 2) respondents with 1 or 2 children were more likely to buy special books and other materials which were intended to help their elementary child in school (p = .08, elementary and p = .21, secondary); 3) respondents with only 1 child were less enthusiastic about their child's secondary school holding meetings to help them learn how to help their child in school (p = .32, elementary and p = .10, secondary); 4) respondents with 3 children were less willing to attend an activity put on by

their child's elementary school ($p = .09$, elementary and $p = .23$, secondary); and 5) respondents with 5 or more children more strongly believe the school sends home material about what their child is doing in secondary school ($p = .42$, elementary and $p = .13$, secondary).

Overall, the only consistent trend revealed by the data was that small families were less willing to become directly involved with their child's school and more likely to purchase special materials intended to assist their child in school.

Type of Residence

A 2 x 4 chi-square test was used to tell whether families living in private or public housing had significantly different distributions across each of the four response categories for each interview question. Results of the X^2 tests indicated that residents of private housing: 1) expected their children to do less well in school ($p = .17$, elementary and $p = .15$, secondary); 2) were less likely to attend meetings to keep them informed about how their secondary aged children were doing in school ($p = .23$, elementary and $p = .06$, secondary); and 3) were less likely to help their secondary child with his/her homework ($p = .26$, elementary and $p = .10$, secondary). Residents of public housing: 1) were more apt to think their child's secondary teachers expected him/her to do poorly in school ($p = .23$, elementary and $p = .17$, secondary; were less likely to buy special books to help their secondary children in school ($p = .19$, elementary and $p = .15$, secondary); and 3) were less satisfied with their secondary child's principal ($p = .46$, elementary and $p = .18$, secondary).

Educational Level of Respondent

A 5 x 4 chi-square test was used to tell whether the five educational levels

of respondents (i.e., less than 8 years of schooling, 8 years of schooling, 3 years of high school, completed high school, some college) had significantly different distributions across each of the four response categories for each interview question. Results of the X^2 tests revealed that respondents completing: 1) high school or some college were more strongly disposed to see-to-it that their secondary child did his/her homework ($p = .55$, elementary and $p = .03$, secondary); 2) high school or some college were more likely to see-to-it that their child had a quiet place to study ($p = .10$, elementary and $p = .15$, secondary); 3) high school and respondents completing 8 years of school saw themselves as more actively involved in their elementary child's education ($p = .13$, elementary and .27 secondary); 4) high school less strongly wished the school would hold meetings intended to help item learn how to help their secondary child in school ($p = .18$, elementary and $p = .05$, secondary); 5) 8 years or less of school were less willing to serve as an aide or volunteer in their child's classroom ($p = .14$, elementary and $p = .07$, secondary) and 6) less than 8 years of school did not think the school sent home written material about what was going on in their elementary child's school ($p = .04$, elementary and $p = .21$, secondary).

These data seem to indicate that parental willingness to become actively involved in and knowledgeable about their child's schooling is positively related to the educational level of the parent.

Age of Respondent

A 4 x 4 chi-square test was used to tell whether the age of the respondents (i.e., 20 thru 29, 30 thru 39, 40 thru 49, and above 50) was related to the distribution of responses to each question across the four response categories. Results of the X^2 analyses showed that respondents aged: 1) 50 and above were less satisfied with the work of school principal ($p = .13$, elementary and $p = .03$,

secondary); 2) 40-49 were more certain that their elementary children were learning what they needed for success in life (p = .16, elementary and p = .20, secondary); 3) 40-49 were more positive that the secondary schools were making a special effort to help their child feel good about themselves as a Black person (p = .48, elementary and p = .13, secondary); 4) 40-49 were more willing to attend regularly scheduled meetings intended to keep them informed about what their secondary child was doing in school (p = .19, elementary and p = .13, secondary); 5) 40-49 were more willing to serve as an aide or volunteer in their child's classroom (p = .13, elementary and p = .06, secondary); and 40-49 as well respondents aged 20-29 were less willing to attend meetings held by the school to explain the curriculum, philosophy and how they could help out (p = .07, elementary and .05, secondary).

It is interesting to note that only 13 of the 100 individuals interviewed were between 40-49 years old but this age group accounted for most of the differences in responses as a function of age.

Summary

The major finding of this study was that the inner city Black parents studied did not view their neighborhood schools negatively nor did they view themselves as "locked into battle" with the educational establishment. They had a positive view towards education. That is, parents thought education was important, schools were basically doing a good job and were concerned about their child's progress in school. Their belief that the teachers really try to help their child learn and expected their child to do well in school was consistent with their view of schools as positive caring places. In fact, they were more willing to blame students themselves, parents and poor home environments rather than teachers for some students not trying in school. Thus, the

"conventional wisdom" that parents view teachers as unconcerned about their children and primarily interested in the perceived benefits of a teaching career (i.e., shorter hours, holidays, vacations and salary) was not true for the parents of this study.

Parents did not view the professional staff of their neighborhood schools as "educational elitist." They felt the schools were interested in what parents thought about the type of education their children received, felt welcome at their child's school, and were willing to talk with the teacher or principal if they were concerned about something going on at school. Hence, the educational milieu of the schools seemed to attitudinally and physically invite parents to become involved in their child's education.

The educational milieu invited parents to become involved and parents perceived themselves as involved in their child's education. However, they did not particularly want to work as an aide or volunteer in their child's classroom, nor, did they want to serve on any of the school's decision making bodies. Parents preferred to attend meetings where the curriculum, philosophy and what was going on in the school was explained, or, to go to school and tell about their work, hobby, etc. They also wished the school would send home more written material about what was going on in school and assign more homework. When materials were sent home, parents looked over their child's papers, materials, projects, etc. and were willing to see-to-it that their child had a quiet place to study and completed their homework. Thus, the parents did not want to take over the teachers job or to run the school rather they wanted to stay informed and work in supporting, facilitative roles.

Although parents as a group were enthusiastic about the job schools and teachers were doing some groups of parents were more supportive than others. Small

families, 2-3 members, felt less strongly that schools and teachers were doing a good job and were less willing to become directly involved with schooling or have the school teach them how to work with their child, but were more willing to purchase special materials intended to help their child in school. Educational level of parents was positively related to parents willingness to become involved in schooling -- the higher their educational attainment the more willing they were to become directly involved in schooling. Likewise, parental age was related to attitude and openness to direct involvement; that is, parents in the 40-49 age group viewed schools most positively and were most willing to serve as a classroom aide or volunteer, work with decision making groups, and attend school meetings or activities.

Overall, the results of the study seemed to indicate that the parents supported schooling and were indirectly involved in the education of their children. Support, however, is not everlasting. If schools wish to maintain their current milieu of support and expand into greater collaborative relationships with parents, they must take the first steps because without futher encouragement "working together" may become "working alone" or "working against each other."

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APPENDIX I

MID-SOUTH TEACHER CORPS PARENT SURVEY
FALL 1978

Teacher Corps is in the process of planning activities to be carried out over the next several years. We are asking you to assist us in planning by answering the following questions.

Interview #_____ Interviewer_____

Date of Interview_____ Time of day_____

PART I.

1. Do you think schools are doing a pretty good job?
   Elementary SA A D SD
   Jr. & Sr. High SA A D SD

2. Do you see yourself as actively involved in your child's education?
   Elementary SA A D SD
   Jr. & Sr. High SA A D SD

3. Is your child learning what you expected him/her to learn?
   Elementary SA A D SD
   Jr. & Sr. High SA A D SD

4. Do you think your child is learning what he/she needs to know to be successful in life?
   Elementary SA A D SD
   Jr. & Sr. High SA A D SD

5. Do you expect your child to do well in school?
   Elementary SA A D SD
   Jr. & Sr. High SA A D SD

6. Are the values your child is learning in school the values you want them to learn?
   Elementary SA A D SD
   Jr. & Sr. High SA A D SD

7. Do you feel welcome at your child's schools?
   Elementary SA A D SD
   Jr. & Sr. High SA A D SD

8. Do you feel your child's school cares what you think about the type of education your child is receiving?
   Elementary SA A D SD
   Jr. & Sr. High SA A D SD

9. Do you feel your child's teacher is really trying to help your child learn?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

10. Do you think your child's teacher(s) expects him/her to do well in school?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

11. Should your child's school make special efforts to help your child feel good about him/herself as a Black person?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

12. Should your child's school make special efforts to help your child understand other ethnic, cultural and racial groups?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

13. If the school held meetings for parents to explain the curriculum, philosophy and how parents could help, would you attend?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

14. Would you be willing to go to your child's school and tell about your work, hobby, etc. or help out in the health room, library, etc?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

15. When your child's school puts on some activity, do you attend?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

16. Would you be willing to serve as an aide or volunteer in your child's classroom?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

17. Would you be willing to serve on one of the school's decision making bodies, such as, Title I Advisory Committee, PTA, Principal's Advisory Committee, Teacher Corps Advisory Committe, etc?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

18. I wish my child's school would hold regular meetings to keep me informed about what is going on in the school?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

19. I wish my child's school would hold meetings to help me learn how to help my child in school?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

20. Does the school send home written material about what is going on in school?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

21. If your child needs help with his/her homework, do you help?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

22. Do you see-to-it that your child gets his/her homework done?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr.& Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

23. Do you see-to-it that your child has a quiet place to study?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

24. Do you and your child look over the papers, projects, materials, etc. he/she brings home from school?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

25. Do you buy special books and other materials for the home which are intended to help your child in their education?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

26. If you are concerned about something going on at school, do you feel free to talk with:

A. the principal

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

B. your child's teachers

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

27. Are you satisfied with the work of your child's principal?

Elementary	SA	A	D	SD
Jr. & Sr. High	SA	A	D	SD

Part II.

1. My number one concern about education is . . .

2. I wish my child's teacher would . . .

3. Some students don't try in school because . . .

Part III.

Interviewee: age____sex____ relationship to head of household_____

Population in the household_____; # of adults_____; # children_____
(under 18)

List the ages, sex and school of each of the children under 18 years of age.

	age	sex	grade	name of school
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Residences: 1. owner occupied _____ 2. renter occupied _____ a. public_____

b. private_____

Number of rooms in household _____

Total # of adults in household which are employed _____

Where employed:

1. Professional, technical and kindered employed _____
2. Managers, officers _____
3. Clerical _____
4. Sales _____
5. Craftmen, forman, etc. _____
6. Private household worker _____
7. Service worker _____
8. Laborer _____
9. Occupation not reported _____

Family income in 1977:

_____1. below $7,999
_____2. $8,000—$9,999
_____3. $10,000—$11,999
_____4. $12,000—$13,999
_____5. above $14,000

Years of schooling completed by each adult in the household:

Elementary
1 to 4 _____
5 to 7 _____
8 years _____

High School
1 to 3 _____
4 to years _____

College
1 to 3 _____
3 years _____
4 or more _____